

for itself £3,000,000 to £4,000,000 sterling yearly by this rapid extension of the trade, the consequence is that they are systematically feeding a vicious and illegal demand in China. The opium scourge is one of the greatest antagonists to Christianity in that country, and it is remarkable that it rose simultaneously with modern Christian missions at the commencement of the present century, as if the arch-fiend were vigorously counterplotting the army of the Prince of Peace. Some would soften down the evils of this trade by representing them as merely a parallel to the use of intoxicating drinks in Britain, and therefore as we use £60,000,000 of our stimulants, while the Chinese only use £6,000,000 of opium, it is by no means such a bad business. But two entirely opposite inferences may be drawn. The first is, that opium smoking is not a parallel to wine drinking. It is considered by the Chinese themselves to be a ruinous vice, and therefore, if there be any parallel, it must be between opium smoking and drunkenness. The other inference is, that as the Chinese as yet consume only £6,000,000, there is hope that the evil may yet be checked. The truth is, opium is not, as some would have it, a national stimulant; it is an exotic. The Chinese have had their stimulants of tea, wine, and spirits, for aught we know, for the last four thousand years, whereas opium smoking is but of sixty years' growth, and is as yet comparatively little used in the inland provinces. It has cast its deadly influence over the coast provinces of China, and it rests with the British nation to say whether they will incur the guilt of completing the ruin of the whole of China, or urge the East India Company to seek a more honorable revenue from their prolific territories.

"The subject cannot now be evaded. China is rushing to poverty and ruin, and we, a Christian nation, are chiefly instrumental in effecting this.—Everywhere the missionaries have to mourn the havoc this deadly drug is committing, and they are taunted with the inconsistency of this nation bringing with one hand Bibles and with the other opium. Moreover, the constant export of treasure in payment for the drug has kept the currency of China in a state of chronic disorder for the last twenty years, and their social and political system in the same condition. It has been said that the best way to modify these evils would be to get the trade legalized, thus acquiescing in our deluging China with the drug, so that the British conscience may be saved in the transaction. In the meantime, we content ourselves with the wretched plea that the Chinese must have opium, that the Chinese Government are not in earnest in its prohibition, and that if we do not send it to them others will. This, however, is mere trifling. The bulk of the Chinese nation are not opium smokers as yet. They look upon the habit as a vice, and one which, if kept from the victim for a few years, might be dried up at the roots. It was proved beyond a doubt that the Chinese Government were in earnest when in 1839, they made that noble sacrifice of 20,000 chests, by hurling them all into the sea, and it is but the terror of our arms that has since paralyzed them, and prevented their taking any active course of prohibition. Nor, again, unless opium be grown in China itself, can any other nation but ourselves supply the demand, although, if any could, what should that signify to us?

"India has vast resources, if fairly developed.—The cultivation of long staple cotton alone might prove a mine of wealth. This opium revenue is by no means necessary to her existence. On the contrary, to those who recognize a superintending Provi-

dence, it must be evident that divine retribution will sooner or later overtake this national violation of Christian duty.—Yours, &c.,

"AN OLD RESIDENT IN CHINA."

From Correspondent of the Presbyterian.

## PALESTINE.

HEBREW BIARRAH,  
*Plains of Sharon, 1855.*

Since our residence in the open country, removed from the near neighborhood of cities or towns, where the influence of a mixed and partially civilized population inevitably results in variety and change in popular habits, we have become peculiarly interested in the primitive manners and customs of the native peasantry. In many respects their style of living seems to remain the same as in the days of the patriarchs and judges, and of later Biblical times. The structure of society seems to have taken its present form in the same simple manner, in necessity and Providence. First, the father is the head and governor of a numerous household; if his flocks increase, and his harvests and vintage are abundant, the poor in his vicinity are employed by him, seek his favour and protection, and the more prosperous join and intermarry with his children. This family association becomes a tribe, and afterward the most intelligent and popular of his descendants is chosen to stand for his brethren in all matters of right and wrong among themselves, and intercourse with other people. These head or chief men are denominated Shieks.—Again, as they increase in numbers and wealth, they subdue their weaker neighbors, and add them to their party. There is no safety for individuals separated from the protection of such association. Their rules are various, according to their importance and situation. The Shieks have the responsibility of keeping peace with the Turkish Government, and collecting its legal taxes from their people. In some cases several petty Shieks acknowledge the supremacy of a greater. One of these head Shieks, with whom we are acquainted, receives annually, as a tax, a fee from each of his men, two rotles of semin (thirteen pounds of boiled butter), worth about two dollars.—Another receives three measures of wheat (one and a half bushels); another barley, or grapes, or a sheep, according to the staple produce of his people and their ability.

We are acquainted with two classes of the Arabs, the Bedouins and the Fellaheen. The Fellaheen reside in villages, in ruins, or huts of mud and stone. They cultivate the adjacent district, and raise most of the grain, olives, grapes, figs, and vegetables of this country. They also go out of their villages as shepherds, with their flocks of sheep and goats, and herds of cattle, to graze through the day on uncultivated places, and return for safety every night. Their villages are not composed of scattered dwellings and gardens as in America, but are built close and compact for security. These villages are numerous on the mountains and on the plains, and each village has its Shiek. We also know two classes of the Bedouins, the stationary and the roving. They reside in tents of black goat's hair cloth. The stationary have flocks and herds, and a right to certain lands from government. They encamp near these lands, and sow grain and field-crops, water-melons, &c., but do not irrigate, plant trees, or vineyards, or gardens. The roving Bedouins do not cultivate the soil in any way, but depend for subsistence on raising camels, horses, herds, and flocks, and frequently remove their encampments for fresh pasturage and